

# Speech deconstruction: an examination of modern day politics

A researcher's perspective



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## About Researchers in Residence (RinR)

Researchers in Residence benefits researchers, young people and teachers via UK-wide school placements across social, physical, life and earth sciences and the humanities subjects.

### Researchers:

- Work with some of the most challenging and inquisitive minds
- Renew your enthusiasm for research and develop communication and teaching skills

### Schools:

- Access valuable classroom support
- Interact with researchers to motivate, inspire and maximise student learning
- Enhance learning experiences and realise improved grades

## What was the aim of your placement?

"I mostly focused on discourse analysis with the sixth formers. The English students were already doing work on word construction and decoding messages, so I was able to tie-in my work on language and foreign policy. We worked on analysing political speeches from well-known political figures and world leaders, such as George Bush.

I tried to choose topical examples for the students to examine. I thought it would help their understanding and analysis of the text, if they were able to relate it to current issues seen in the media. I hoped bringing in elements of my own research would also help to provide a useful context for them to learn."

## What did you hope to get out of the placement?

"I was unsure about what I wanted to do at the end of my PhD. I had

considered teaching in the past, and thought it would be a good opportunity to gain experience of teaching in a secondary school to a new type of audience. I wanted to find out how I'd get on in a secondary school environment, as well as gain experience of presenting my research to different audiences."

## How did you allocate your time to the school?

"I was able to fit my placement around my lectures, working in the school outside my regular teaching hours."

## Did you have any apprehensions prior to beginning the placement?

"Not being in that environment since my own school days, I had totally forgotten about the crowd control element of secondary school teaching! Watching the teachers control a class of 30 or so, lively teenagers, was definitely a bit daunting. I did worry about how I was going to fare in leading and managing my own class."

### How was this different from the reality?

"Fortunately, when the time came to do my own sessions, the students were well behaved and attentive. The teacher was always there to offer help and support, if needed, but luckily there weren't any disruptions.

Also, university teaching tends to be quite discussion-led; the role of a lecturer is that of a facilitator, asking questions to stimulate debate amongst your students. Secondary school teaching is completely different; your role is much more that of an instructor. It's a lot more hands on, providing materials and examples that students can use to learn from. You have to learn how to lead your class through the subject matter, providing a steer on what things to consider."

### Highlight of the project?

"The highlight for me was working with the A-level students. They were so bright, in their ability to grasp new concepts and ideas. They picked up on things very quickly and were very clever. Being close to finishing with formal education, they were already considering their future options and university. I talked with some about Oxbridge admissions and research topics at university. The year 7s were great too. Though not at a stage where they were able to grasp the same amount of detail and complexity as the older years, they were fun to work with as well. There is definitely a sense of achievement that comes from being able to hold the attention of a class full of 11 year olds for an entire lesson."

**"The school provided a range of different audience types, from the upper sixth form students studying advanced history and English, to the year 7 first years. It was useful to be exposed to such a wide range."**

### Best thing about being a Researcher in Residence?

"It was useful to get exposure to secondary school teaching. Having considered it as a possible career choice, it was useful to get some practical experience."

### What did you learn/get out of the experience?

"The placement allowed me to practice different teaching styles. Keeping the students engaged was a challenge and required a change in my normal teaching style."

### Life after RinR, what have you been up to since finishing your placement?

"I've just started a new job as a lecturer in International Relations at the University of Leeds."

### Would you recommend RinR to a fellow researcher?

"I would. Especially to those researchers interested in pursuing secondary school teaching following their PhDs."

### Eligibility

RinR is open to all PhD and post doctoral researchers funded directly or indirectly by one of the seven UK Research Councils or the Wellcome Trust.

### Training

Participating researchers attend a one-day training session covering effective communication and pupil engagement and the do's and don'ts in the classroom. Advice on activities past researchers have used to engage young people is given and you'll find out more about the kind of situations you may encounter during your placement.

### How to apply

Complete the online application form at:  
[researchersinresidence.ac.uk](http://researchersinresidence.ac.uk)  
our RinR co-ordinators will then match you with a suitable school and contact you.

